

BOOK REVIEW

Handbook of the Mosquitoes of North America. Robert Matheson. Second Edition: Revised and Amplified (Facsimile of the Edition of 1944) Hafner Pub. Co. 272 pp. text, 41 figures, 33 plates.

Matheson's "Handbook" first appeared in 1944 and was at once recognized as invaluable to students of North American mosquitoes. Unfortunately it has been out of print for many years. This review describes the recently republished volume made available by the Hafner Publishing Co.

Examination of the volume quickly disclosed that it is not a "new edition, revised and amplified" but is just a reprinting of the first edition. The rapid accumulation of knowledge in every scientific field makes it difficult to assess the current value of any text over 15 years old.

In general, Chapters I and II on anatomy and biology continue to be of value. Data accumulated since 1944 on the behavior of mosquitoes (particularly adults) outdate the sections on "Habits of Adults" and "Hibernation." In the former section a considerable amount of new information has been reported on swarming behavior and migratory flights. In the latter section diapause is not mentioned.

Chapter III on "Mosquitoes in Relation to Human Welfare" is still excellent source material. Advances in malaria eradication make the map and most of the data obsolete. The section on "Human Encephalitis" is of historical value only.

Chapter IV, "The Problem of Mosquito Reduction," is of value only in the area of basic water management. Chemical control, with the exception of the use of fuel oil and paris green, has changed completely. This is highlighted by the statement: "At present a new and very effective preparation, known commercially as DDT, is being tried . . ."

Chapter V on collecting and preserving material is clearly and concisely presented and still timely.

The systemic account of the mosquitoes of North America is excellent. The keys and descriptive material are well done. Obviously, recent data on species distribution and newly recognized species could not be anticipated. The illustrations and plates have lost little in reprinting and are of good quality.

The disappointment in finding that this is just a reprinting rather than a revision was somewhat mitigated by having the "Handbook" available again. This book is still a "must" for students interested in mosquitoes.

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